

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4450

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, VT, MZ, PO

SUBJECT: TWO ADDITIONAL EXPELLED MISSIONARIES ARRIVE FROM MOZAMBIQUE

1. APRIL 23 "CORRIERE DELLA SERA" PUBLISHED INTERVIEW WITH COMBONIAN PRIESTS FATHERS CLAUDIO CRIMI (ITALIAN) AND JOSE VILLA LOBO (SPANISH), WHO ARRIVED YESTERDAY FROM MOZAMBIQUE; OTHER EXPELLEES

FATHER VALENTINO BENISGNA, BROTHER MARIO PIETTA, AND MOTHER MADALINA REVILLA GUTIERREZ (OF DAUGHTERS OF CALVARY MISSION AT SONGO). ALSO PRESENT AT INTERVIEW.

2. FATHERS CRIMI AND VILLA LOBO, OF THE SONGO-CABORA BASSA MISSION IN DIOCESE OF TETE, HAD NOT SIGNED DOCUMENT CRITICAL OF GOP INJUSTICES. THEY SAID MISSION AT CONSTRUCTION SITE OF COBORA BASSA DAM, WHICH IS SURROUNDED BY BARBED WIRE AND GUARDED BY MILITARY POLICE, CARED FOR 80 AFRICAN CHILDREN AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF 20,000 DAM WORKERS OF VARIOUS NATIONALITIES. DURING GOOD FRIDAY EVENING SERVICES, ABOUT 200 PORTUGUESE ASSAULTED MISSION HURLING STONES AND SHOUTING INSULTS. PRIESTS AND PARISHIONERS ASSUMED THESE PERSONS ENTERED CAMP COMPOUND WITH CONSENT OF AUTHORITIES, AS LOCAL POLICE CHIEF AND HEAD OF POLI-

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TICAL POLICE WERE ALREADY ON SCENE BEFORE ASSAULT. LATTER TWO ENCOURAGED PRIESTS TO ABANDON MISSION INDICATING THEY COULD NOT

ASSURE SAFETY OF PRIESTS OR OTHERS. AFTER HOLDING OUT FOR NIGHT, CRIMI AND VILLA LOBO, ESCORTED BY SOLDIERS, LEFT SONGO AT DAWN FOR TETE. A WEEK LATER, DESPITE PROTEST OF BISHOP OF TETE, TWO PRIESTS WERE OBLIGED TO LEAVE MOZAMBIQUE.

3. ONLY 53 COMBONIAN PRIESTS AND 41 SISTERS REMAIN IN MOZAMBIQUE, ACCORDING TO TWO PRIESTS. EIGHT MISSIONS IN VAST TETE REGION ARE COMPLETELY WITHOUT RELIGIOUS PERSONNEL. DUTCH MISSIONARIES HAVE ALSO DECIDED TO LEAVE COUNTRY, AND SUPERIORS OF MISSIONARY CONGREGATIONS HAVE ALREADY CONTACTED VATICAN TO PLAN LINE OF COMMON ACTION. THE PRIESTS SAID THAT MISSIONARIES PERMITTED THE NATIVE POPULATION TO SURVIVE AND TO BECOME AWARE OF ITS PROBLEMS. THEY FEEL THAT POLICE ACTION AGAINST THEM STEMS MAINLY FROM LATTER REASON. VOLPE

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